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071402Z Aug 00

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	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6778
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 004362

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER

PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [Z1](#)
SUBJECT: WITH MUGABE IN CRUSADE MODE, THE STATE'S FUTURE
ECONOMIC SURVIVAL DROPS OUT OF THE LAND EQUATION

REF: HARARE 4317

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MUGABE IS IN CRUSADE MODE, CAMPAIGNING FOR HIS PARTY'S CAPTURE OF THE PRESIDENCY IN [12002](#). HE HAS MADE CLEAR HIS LEGACY WILL BE THAT OF THE BLACK ZIMBABWEAN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE WORLD TO RETURN THE LAND TO HIS PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THE DAMAGE DONE TO THE COUNTRY AND THE ECONOMY. WE FULLY EXPECT HIS GOVERNMENT TO GAZETTE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF 3,000 FARMS, ALTHOUGH WE QUESTION WHETHER IT COULD FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE REST OF ITS PROMISES. THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE THE MONEY TO ACQUIRE THAT MANY FARMS UNDER CURRENT RULES, AND THE INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE AND FOOD INSECURITY RESULTING FROM RESETTLEMENT IN THE TIME FRAME ENVISIONED WOULD SPELL DISASTER. THE ENSUING ECOLOGICAL NIGHTMARE, AS THE DESTITUTE AND UNTRAINED "LAND-STARVED" PEASANTRY PRACTICE SUBSISTENCE FARMING ON NOW PRODUCTIVE LAND SLOWLY TURNING IT INTO A MOONSCAPE, WOULD COMPLETE THE PICTURE. ECONOMICS DO NOT FORM PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL DISCOURSE, AND INDEED IT IS ONLY THROUGH A POLITICAL PRISM THAT ONE CAN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESIDENT'S SEEMINGLY ERRATIC ACTIONS. ON THE SAME DAY
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HIS FINANCE MINISTER TOUTED THE INTRODUCTION OF MEASURES TO REVERSE THE SLIDE, MUGABE WAS INSULTING DONORS ON NATIONAL TELEVISION. THE PRESIDENT ALSO PUBLICLY CONTRADICTS HIS SENIOR NDEBELE PARTY MEMBERS, A FACT THAT WILL STRETCH THE FABRIC OF THE ZANU-PF UNITY ACCORD TO THE LIMIT. IN SPITE OF THE DAMAGE MUGABE HAS INFLECTED TO THE COUNTRY AND EVEN HIS OWN PARTY, THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE HAS BEEN SLOW OR UNABLE TO FORMULATE A CATCHY POSITION TO COUNTER THE PRESIDENT'S DOMINANCE ON THE LAND DEBATE. MEANWHILE, THE JUGGERNAUT ROLLS ON. END SUMMARY.

[12](#). (C) POLITICAL, NOT ECONOMIC, LOGIC PREVAILS ON THE LAND QUESTION IN ZIMBABWE, AND PRESIDENT MUGABE IS WELL DOWN THE PATH OF A CRUSADE. HE HAS SERVED NOTICE THAT HIS BOTTOM LINE IS THAT HE IS DETERMINED TO SECURE HIS PLACE IN HISTORY AS THE BLACK ZIMBABWEAN WHO BROUGHT LAND BACK TO HIS PEOPLE AND FOUGHT IMPERIALISM. HE SEES HIMSELF AS PROUD AND ALONE; THE FIDEL CASTRO OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

13. (C) MUGABE THINKS THAT THE LAND REFORM PROCESS CAN BE DE-LINKED FROM THE ECONOMY. WE BELIEVE HE IS GRAVELY WRONG IN THIS ASSESSMENT. MOREOVER, HIS RHETORIC OF LATE CONFIRMS THAT LAND IS PART AND PARCEL OF HIS NEWFOUND NATIONALISM; THAT HE IS FIGHTING THE SECOND WAR OF LIBERATION. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT HE SOON WILL GAZETTE THE 3,000 FARMS HE HAS SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WILL FORCIBLY ACQUIRE. (NOTE: THE ACCELERATED LAND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE NEWLY-FORMED "ZIMBABWE NATIONAL LAND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE," A
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ZANU-PF BODY WITH NO LEGAL AUTHORITY, CHAIRED BY VICE PRESIDENT MSIKA, AND BYPASSING CABINET AND PARLIAMENT. END NOTE.) HOWEVER, FOLLOWING THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION'S SUIT CHALLENGING THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE USE OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS, WHICH INFURIATED PRESIDENT MUGABE, WE QUESTION WHETHER HE WILL STOP AT 3,000. INDEED, MUGABE COULD WELL ORDER SEIZURE OF ALL WHITE-OWNED COMMERCIAL FARMS OR AN INVASION OF CFU PRESIDENT TIM HENWOOD'S FARM, OR A RAID ON THE CFU'S HEADQUARTERS OR OTHER BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE GOVERNMENT'S DICTATORIAL ACTIONS.

14. (C) AS WE REPORTED IN REFTTEL, THE 3,000 FIGURE DATES TO 1997 WHEN A LIST OF COMMERCIAL FARMS WHOSE LAND SURFACE TOTALED FIVE MILLION HECTARES WAS DRAWN UP. IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED ROUGHLY USD THREE BILLION TO ACQUIRE THESE: 80 PERCENT OF THE COST WOULD BE FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND 20 PERCENT FOR THE LAND ITSELF. EVEN IF THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT WERE TO STRONG-ARM THE JUDICIARY TO REDUCE THE MARKET VALUE OF THESE FARMS TO, SAY, USD ONE BILLION, IT STILL WOULD HAVE TO COME UP WITH USD 250 MILLION (WHICH IT DOES NOT HAVE) UP FRONT TO COMPENSATE THE CURRENT OWNERS UNDER PRESENT REGULATIONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 004362

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15. (C) THE FIVE MILLION HECTARE FIGURE WAS INTENDED FOR RESETTLEMENT OF 500,000 LANDLESS FAMILIES. WE POINT OUT THAT IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE DIRECT HIRE WORKFORCE OF ALL THE COMMERCIAL FARMS TOTALS NEARLY ONE MILLION (THOUGH MANY MORE, SPOUSES, CHILDREN AND OTHER DEPENDENTS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE SUPPORTED BY THE COMMERCIAL FARM WORKERS). THE 3,000 FARMS COMPRISING THE 5 MILLION HECTARES CONSTITUTES ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF THE COMMERCIAL FARM TOTAL. IF THE FARMS ARE SEIZED ABOUT HALF A MILLION FARM WORKERS (50 PERCENT OF 1,000,000) WILL FIND THEMSELVES WITHOUT A JOB OR INCOME, AND BOOTED OUT OF THEIR QUARTERS. AS CURRENTLY PLANNED, THE RESETTLED PORTION OF THE POPULACE WILL EQUAL THE NEWLY DISPLACED AND UNEMPLOYED PORTION, AND THE CURRENTLY PRODUCTIVE

LAND WILL REVERT TO SUBSISTENCE FARMING WITH ALL THE ATTENDANT DISASTROUS ECOLOGICAL AND RESOURCE-DESTROYING CONSEQUENCES. IN SIX TO TEN YEARS THE RESETTLED FARMS COULD LOOK LIKE THE COMMUNAL LANDS ALLOCATED IN THE 1980'S BY GOVERNMENT - WITHOUT FARM INFRASTRUCTURE LIKE IRRIGATION AND NOW ARID, TREELESS, ERODED AND LACKING ROADS, ELECTRICITY, SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

16. (C) DURING EARLIER RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS BY THE GOVERNMENT, IT TOOK 20 YEARS TO MOVE HALF THE CURRENT TARGET OF 500,000 WITH RESULTANT SERIOUS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AND VIABILITY PROBLEMS. MOST OF THOSE WHO
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WERE RESETTLED WERE NOT GIVEN TITLE AND ARE ON LAND THAT IS CURRENTLY IDLE DUE TO DEGRADATION. IT IS IN THE REALM OF FANTASY TO IMAGINE THAT THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT WILL MANAGE TO RESETTLE 500,000 PEOPLE IN ANYTHING BUT A STATE-ORCHESTRATED ROUT IN ONE MONTH. THE INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT OF AT LEAST ONE MILLION PEOPLE IN THAT TIMEFRAME WOULD SPELL A DISASTER, INCLUDING ANY HOPE OF MAINTAINING FOOD SECURITY, THAT WOULD ECLIPSE SUCH ILL-STARRED EXPERIMENTS AS SAMORA MACHEL'S "ALDEIAS COMUNAIS."

17. (C) PRESIDENT MUGABE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT ANALYZE OR EVEN VIEW THE ISSUE IN THESE TERMS. HIS TECHNICIANS, OUT OF FEAR, TRY TO RATIONALIZE WHAT IS EVIDENTLY IRRATIONAL THINKING. THESE INDIVIDUALS ALSO HARBOR THE ILLUSION THAT NO MATTER WHAT, THE DONORS WILL HAVE TO COME TO ZIMBABWE'S ASSISTANCE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN TERMS. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED THAT THIS CAUSE WILL HELP HIS PARTY WIN THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. WHILE FINANCE MINISTER SIMBA MAKONI WAS IN PARLIAMENT ON AUGUST 3 INTRODUCING A FRAMEWORK TO TRY TO RESCUE THE ECONOMY, PRESIDENT MUGABE WAS IN BINDURA ADDRESSING THE ZIMBABWEAN FARMERS UNION CONFERENCE, DEFIANTLY INSULTING THE DONORS IN SHONA. SUCH CONTRADICTIONS MAKE SENSE UNDER POLITICAL LOGIC, AND CONSEQUENTLY SOME FORWARD THINKING DONORS ARE MAKING CONTINGENCY PLANS NOT FOR LAND REFORM FINANCE, BUT FOR A HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY.

18. (C) IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MUCH MORE OF THIS ZANU-PF CAN TAKE. THE PRESIDENT PUBLICLY CONTRADICTS
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KEY SENIOR GOVERNMENT FIGURES, SUCH AS HOME AFFAIRS MINISTER JOHN NKOMO. HE PLACES VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH MSIKA IN CHARGE OF THE LAND REFORM PROGRAM, BUT TELLS WAR VETERANS LEADER CHENJERAI HITLER HUNZVI TO IGNORE THE VICE PRESIDENT. THE RULING PARTY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MATEBELELAND IS AT ITS MOST FRAGILE SINCE INDEPENDENCE, AND KEEPING JOSEPH MSIKA ON THE TEAM IS THE ONLY WAY TO PROP UP THE UNITY ACCORD THAT FUSED JOSHUA NKOMO'S ZAPU-PF WITH MUGABE'S ZANU.

19. (C) THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE TO DATE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO THWART THE PRESIDENT'S LAND CAMPAIGN THAT IS BACKED UP BY THE FULL MACHINERY OF THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT. INDEED, MUGABE HONED-IN ON THE OPPOSITION'S WEAKNESS: LACK OF CLARITY IN THE POPULAR PERCEPTION ON WHERE IT STANDS ON THE LAND. MOREOVER, THE MDC AND ITS TRADE UNION ALLIES HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSINGLY CAST AS BEDFELLOWS OF THE WHITE COMMERCIAL FARMERS. ITS LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN UNABLE TO SHAKE THE IMAGE OF SELLOUTS TO THE WHITES, A PERCEPTION THAT MAY BE GAINING CURRENCY. THE ONE-DAY STAYAWAY, WHICH ZCTU ENDORSED AND ABBREVIATED ON THE EVE OF ITS TAKING PLACE, WAS NOT A RESOUNDING SUCCESS. ITS OWNERSHIP WAS UNCLEAR, THERE WAS LITTLE PUBLIC DEBATE AROUND IT, AND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ENDS AND MEANS WAS

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VAGUE. INDEED, WE UNDERSTAND THAT ZCTU WAS DIVIDED ON
THE STRIKE, NOT BECAUSE ANYONE IN IT IS PRO-MUGABE, BUT
BECAUSE THEY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE LINK TO THE
COMMERCIAL FARMERS.

10. (C) THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, AMENDED BY
PRESIDENTIAL DECREE, WILL BE TABLED IN PARLIAMENT FOR
RATIFICATION. ZANU-PF LIKELY WILL WIN, AS IT ONLY TAKES
A SIMPLE MAJORITY TO DO SO. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT
THE MDC'S POSITION WILL BE AT THAT TIME ON LAND. AT
THIS WRITING, THE ONLY WAY FOR IT TO TURN THE TABLES
WOULD BE TO MOVE MASSIVELY TOWARD THE RURAL AREAS. FOR
THE MOMENT THE MDC APPEARS TO BE CONCENTRATING ON ITS
URBAN BASE, COMMUNICATING THROUGH ITS PARTISAN
NEWSPAPER, "THE DAILY NEWS". ALTHOUGH RULE OF LAW IS
THE MDC'S NUMBER ONE ISSUE, IT HAS ABDICATED THE
POLITICAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVE IN THE RURAL AREAS TO
ZANU-PF AND THE WAR VETERANS.

11. (C) CONFIRMING OUR PERCEPTION THAT ZANU IS IN
CAMPAIGN MODE IS THE FACT THAT THE JULY 20 ZANU-PF
CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING WAS ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION, AND HOW TO GET THINGS RIGHT FOR IT. THE BODY
DISCUSSED THE ECONOMY AND LAND, BUT DID NOT CONDUCT A
POSTMORTEM ON THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. AT THIS
POINT, WE THINK THAT MUGABE HAS NOT COMPLETELY MADE UP
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HIS MIND AS TO WHETHER HE WILL RUN IN 2002. SOME HERE
THINK THAT IF MUGABE VIEWS HIMSELF AS SUCCESSFUL ON THE
LAND ISSUE, HE WILL BE SATISFIED AND NOT PRESENT HIMSELF
AS A CANDIDATE, AND, LOOK INSTEAD FOR A WAY TO RETIRE
WITH HONOR AND ACCLAMATION. WE WORRY THAT THAT MAY BE
WISHFUL THINKING.

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